

Sheet Metal Worker Consumer Fact Sheet

Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers

The Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers protects the public through regulation of the practice of sheet metal work in Massachusetts. It determines eligibility for admission to examinations for licensure, conducts examinations, and licenses qualified individuals to practice sheet metal work at the journeyman and master levels, on a restricted and unrestricted basis. The Board also licenses apprentices, training centers, instructors, and business entities performing sheet metal work. The Board holds monthly meetings, hears complaints, and issues disciplinary action as appropriate. Currently, there are more than 13,500 individuals and businesses licensed to practice sheet metal work in Massachusetts.

The Board consists of seven volunteer members including master and journeyman sheet metal workers, representatives from the Department of Public Safety, the Division of Professional Licensure, and a public member.

Licensed Sheet Metal Workers

Licensed sheet metal workers fabricate and install sheet metal systems used in all types of building ventilation systems, to provide the proper quantity of breathable air and environmental comfort to building occupants. These ventilation systems include ductwork, intake and exhaust louvers, and dampers, and may also include fire and life safety ventilation systems such as smoke exhaust systems, stairwell pressurization systems, smoke dampers, fire dampers, and related accessories. Licensed sheet metal workers also install various styles of metal roofing systems for commercial or industrial application, that provide long-lasting moisture and weather protection to building structures and occupants.

Only a master or journeyman sheet metal worker examined and licensed by the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers, with the proper permits issued by the local building inspector, can perform sheet metal work at your home or business.

Many licensees obtained their master or journeyman licenses through the Board's grandfathering period. Since the grandfathering period ended on February 18, 2011 journeyman and master licenses may only be obtained by examination.

Types of Sheet Metal Worker Licenses

An **unrestricted master sheet metal worker** has obtained an unrestricted journeyman license, completed a 40 hour master class, and successfully passed the unrestricted master sheet metal worker examination. An unrestricted master sheet metal worker may work either as an individual, a firm, or a corporation. A unrestricted master sheet metal worker must maintain a regular place of business where the current license is displayed. The unrestricted master sheet metal worker may employ other masters, journeymen and apprentices.

An **unrestricted journeyman sheet metal worker** has worked for five years as an apprentice, completed 750 hours of theory at an institution approved by the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers and successfully passed the unrestricted journeyman examination. An unrestricted journeyman may work as an individual when performing sheet metal work.

A **restricted master sheet metal worker** has obtained a restricted journeyman license, completed a 40 hour master class, and successfully passed the restricted master sheet metal worker examination. A restricted master sheet metal worker may work either as an individual, a firm, or a corporation. A restricted master sheet metal worker must maintain a regular place of business where the current license is displayed. The master sheet metal worker may employ other restricted masters, restricted journeymen and apprentices.

A **restricted journeyman sheet metal worker** has worked for three years as an apprentice, completed 450 hours of theory at an institution approved by the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers, and successfully passed the restricted journeyman examination. A restricted journeyman works as an individual in performing sheet metal work.

Restricted masters and journeymen are limited to working on residential dwellings not more than 3-stories in height and non-residential projects which are under 3-stories and up to 10,000 square feet.

An apprentice sheet metal worker is a person learning the trade who is registered with the Board. Apprentices may only work under the direct supervision of a master or journeyman sheet metal worker.

Permits

The local building inspector must issue a permit before any sheet metal work can be installed, altered, removed, replaced, or repaired. Permits for performing sheet metal work are issued only to licensed sheet metal workers.

Massachusetts law prohibits anyone except for a licensed sheet metal worker from installing, removing or repairing sheet metal work due to public safety concerns. For example, duct work that is improperly sized and installed can result in poor ventilation and indoor air quality issues. Metal roofing systems that are improperly installed can result

in roof leaks that, over time, may cause mold growth or structural damage. These are just two examples of possible consequences when sheet metal work is performed by untrained and inexperienced persons.

Consumer Tips for Choosing a Sheet Metal Worker

- Hire a licensed professional. Call the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers at 617-727-4454 to verify licensure, the number of years licensed, and the licensee's disciplinary history. Or, do your own verification through the “[Check a License](#)” feature available through the Division of Professional Licensure’s (DPL) [ePLACE](#) portal.
- A master or journeyperson sheet metal worker's license type and number must be shown on any sign, listing, or advertisement. Always look for this information when hiring a sheet metal worker.
- When applying for a permit, a licensed sheet metal worker must sign, under the penalties of perjury, that they carry liability insurance, or that person must present a waiver of insurance signed by you, the homeowner. To prevent future problems, be sure the sheet metal worker carries liability insurance.
- Get at least three estimates for your job. Competition promotes fairness.
- Call several companies. Get referrals from friends, family or neighbors. Contact a trade association for a list of member companies in your area.
- Agree in writing to the scope and price of the work to be completed. The agreement should list all work to be performed, the type of materials to be used, rough and finish completion dates, permitting and inspection information, and the type of warranty on materials and workmanship.
- Payment should be made on a percentage basis, based on the total amount of work to be performed, as the work progresses.
- Ask to see the permit. This permit is your guarantee that the work will be inspected and that the professional is responsible for the work performed.

Filing a Complaint

While the majority of licensees conduct themselves as true professionals, the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers and the Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) will take action against those licensees who fail to maintain acceptable standards of competence and integrity.

In many cases, complaints are made by dissatisfied consumers. However, dissatisfaction alone is not proof of incompetence or sufficient grounds for disciplinary action. Cases are evaluated on the basis of evidence. The more written evidence presented, the stronger the complaint.

If you have a serious complaint against a licensed plumber or gas fitter, call or write DPL's Office of Investigations and ask for a complaint form or for instruction about filing a complaint online through DPL's [ePLACE](#) portal. The Office's contact information is listed below:

Division of Professional Licensure (DPL)
Office of Investigations
1000 Washington Street, Suite 710
Boston, Mass. 02118
(617) 727-7406

For more information on the complaint process in general, please visit DPL's "[Have a Complaint About a Licensee?](#)" page.

Trade Associations

Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors of America

100 Grossman Drive, Suite 300
Braintree, MA 02184
(781) 849-3220

Mass. Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association

178 Forbes Road Suite 218
Braintree, MA 02184-2610
(781) 843-3800

Air Conditioning Contractors of America

11 Robert Toner Boulevard # 234
North Attleboro, MA 02763
(508) 839-3407

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